February 10, 2012

Dear Melrose Historical Commission,

I write in hopes of joining you in the work of protecting and preserving Melrose's long and fascinating history. As my attached CV will attest, I can bring to the commission a range of professional experiences as a historical researcher, public historian, and history teacher. What my CV cannot impart is my great affection for the city of Melrose, the community that nurtured me in childhood and that I now call home once more as an adult. Any service I can render the commission would be a great opportunity for me to give back in some small way to the city and people who did so much to shape my character.

For about a decade I lived away from Melrose. Upon returning a couple of years ago, I began to see the city for the first time as an outsider. The sights I grew up with—the flamboyant exuberance of the city's Victorian mansions, the Dickensian warmth of Main Street's lamps on a cold winter night, the quiet simplicity of the remaining Colonial era houses—began to impress themselves upon my imagination to an extent that they did not when I was a native. This newfound love for the city's architecture inspired in me a desire to learn what I could of local history. As a consequence, I have spent many a happy hour with Elbridge Goss's *History of Melrose*, to be followed by rambling walks through the city in search of the place names and structures that festoon his narrative. When I now pass through the streets of Melrose, they are alive to me with a past that has too often been forgotten.

That this beautiful place has been preserved when many other communities have failed to protect their historical districts is a great credit both to the vision of the city's leadership over the past thirty-five years and to the tireless work of homeowners. With steady stewardship, Melrose will continue to grow while protecting its historical resources. As someone who has spent much of his adult life working to disseminate historical knowledge, however, I believe the city could do more to educate citizens and local students about our shared history. If the essential facts of Melrose's history are not brought into the public arena in an easily accessible way, our people will inhabit a scenic, "historic" location that will do little to impart the visceral, vital lessons of the past. I would love to work on any project that could bring the city's resources to bear on publicizing Melrose history, ranging from new signage, to print literature, to walking tours, to online media. Too often Melrosians feel they must travel to and spend their money in Salem, Concord or Plymouth to experience a compelling historical setting; I think they should stay here, and invite others from neighboring communities to join us.

We Melrosians have the good fortune to have inherited one of the most attractive business districts in the Commonwealth, and some of the state's most varied and impressive housing stock in its surrounding neighborhoods. I would like nothing more than to aid in preserving, protecting, and promoting these great gifts from the past which we hold in trust for the future. I hope soon to have the chance to join in your important work.

Sincerely,

Jim Bennett

Curriculum Vitae

James T. Bennett

Melrose, MA 02176
Phone:
E-mail: bennett.325@osu.edu

Educational History

Doctoral Candidacy Examinations, The Ohio State University — Spring, 2005
Major Field: Medieval History
Minor Fields: Early Modern History, Middle English Literature

M.A. in History, The Ohio State University — Spring, 2004

Intensive Summer Program in French Language, Institut Lyonnais pour la diffusion de la langue et de la culture françaises, Lyon, France — Summer, 2001

M.A. in History, Boston University — Spring, 2000

B.A. in History, *magna cum laude*, Boston University — Spring, 2000

Employment History

Presidential Fellow, Graduate School, The Ohio State University — Winter 2009-Autumn2009

Lecturer, Department of History, The Ohio State University — Autumn, 2008

Schallek Fellow, The Medieval Academy of America — 2007-2008
Dissertation research at the British Library, the Public Record Office, the Bodleian Library, the Cambridge University Library, and the Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Archives

Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of History, The Ohio State University — 2001-2007

Five Years' experience in planning courses, delivering lectures, leading discussions, grading student work, and using technology in the classroom and in course websites

Graduate Associate, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, The Ohio State University — Summer, 2003
Assisted in organizing an academic speaker series and editing a volume of scholarly essays

Research Assistant, Institute for Medieval History, Boston University — 1998-2000
Assisted in organizing two academic conferences

Seasonal Park Ranger, Boston National Historical Park — 1997-2000
Led historical tours of the Freedom Trail and historical progams at Faneuil Hall and Dorchester Heights in South Boston

Teaching Experience

Facilitator, Teaching Orientation for New Graduate Assistants And Faculty, University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, The Ohio State University — September, 2009

Organizer, colloquium on teaching world history the Goldberg Center for Excellence in Teaching, The Ohio State University — March, 2006

Courses Taught as a Small Section Leader (SSL), The Ohio State University — 2005-2007

History 111, Western Civilization from Origins to 1648	(five times)
History 112, Western Civilizations from 1648 to present	(twice)
History 181, World History from Origins to 1500	(twice)

Courses taught as a Discussion Section Leader (DSL), The Ohio State University: — 2001-2005

History 111, Western Civilization from Origins to 1648	(five times)
History 112, Western Civilization from 1648 to present	(four times)
History 151, American History to Reconstruction	(once)

Courses graded, The Ohio State University:

History 506, Early Christianity	Winter 2003
History 507, Medieval Christianity	Spring 2004

Service

Member, Curriculum Committee of the Research and Graduate Council, The Graduate School of The Ohio State University — 2006-2007

Chairperson, Graduate Associate Compensation and Benefits Committee, University Senate of The Ohio State University — 2005-2007

Delegate to the Council of Graduate Students, Department of History, The Ohio State University	2005-2007
Member, Board of Directors, Vagantes Graduate Conference on Medieval Studies	2006-2008

Honors and Awards:

Founders' Prize for Best Graduate Student Paper, Medieval Association of the Pacific	March, 2010
First Prize in the Humanities Division, Hayes Graduate Research Forum, The Ohio State University	April, 2009
Jim Falls Prize for Best Graduate Student Paper, Mid-America Medieval Association	March, 2009
Graduate Research Small Grant, College of Humanities, The Ohio State University	January, 2009
Presidential Fellowship, The Graduate School of The Ohio State University	November, 2008
Schallek Fellowship, The Medieval Academy of America	2007-2008
Best Graduate Student Teacher Award, Phi Alpha Theta, The Ohio State University	May, 2007
Schallek Award, The Medieval Academy of America	May, 2006
Philip Poirier Award for Research in British Archives, Department of History, The Ohio State University	May, 2006
Small Research Grant, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, The Ohio State University	April, 2006
Stanley J. Kahrl Award for Best Graduate Student Essay on a Medieval or Renaissance Topic, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, The Ohio State University	May, 2004
University Fellowship, The Ohio State University	2000-2001

Lectures and Presentations

"The Literate Rebels of St Albans in 1381," The Medieval Association of the Pacific, University of Puget Sound	March, 2010

"Were Peasants Reading Old English in the Fourteenth Century? The Peculiar Audience of a Previously Unknown Copy of Anglo-Saxon Charter S 1031," Texts & Contexts: A Manuscript Conference, Center for Epigraphical and Paleographical Studies, The Ohio State University	November, 2009
"War, Pestilence, Famine, Death.... and Literacy? or, How I Found a Dissertation Topic I Really Love," Presentation at Orientation for Incoming Graduate Students, Graduate School, The Ohio State University	September, 2009
"How Literacy Transformed the Political Culture of Late Medieval St Albans," International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of Western Michigan	May. 2009
"The Measure of Literacy in Later Medieval England: The Case of St Albans, 1237-1399," Hayes Graduate Research Forum, The Ohio State University	April, 2009
"Expanding Practical Literacy in Medieval St Albans," Expanding Literacy Studies Conference, The Ohio State University	April, 2009
"The Once and Future Burghers: Social Memory and Civic Identity in Late Medieval St Albans," Mid-America Medieval Association, University of Missouri, Kansas City	March, 2009
"The Cultural Currency of Milling in Late Medieval England" Vagantes Graduate Conference on Medieval Studies, The Ohio State University	March, 2008
"The Memory Project of Thomas de la Mare," International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of Western Michigan	May, 2007
Panel Chair, Vagantes Graduate Conference on Medieval Studies, Loyola University, Chicago	March, 2007
"The Logic of Social Violence in Late Medieval England: St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds in the Early Fourteenth Century," Vagantes Graduate Conference on Medieval Studies, University of California, Berkeley	March, 2006
Post-Play Commentator for Anthony Minghella's *Two Planks and a Passion*, Department of Theatre, The Ohio State University	March, 2005

Works in Progress

Doctoral Dissertation: "Becoming Literate in Medieval St. Albans"